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ABSTRACT

Presented by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and focusing on education and the arts, humanities, and sciences, these proceedings present a public discourse about useful knowledge for the 1990s. Ernest L. Boyer discusses the need for students to learn to make connections by putting their learning in historical, social, and ethical perspective. David Mathews stresses that students need knowledge that goes beyond the facts. Democratic politics requires knowing what the facts mean and understanding consequences. Carolyn Reid-Wallace talks about how the United States needs to educate its citizens to understand the multi-cultural richness of the country. In addition, Reid-Wallace stresses that equal access to knowledge needs to be extended to all people. The document concludes with a series of questions asked of three presenters and their answers. (DB)

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THE GOVERNOR'S AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Useful Knowledge for the Nineties

A Symposium

Harrisburg, Pennsylvania
Tuesday, May 1, 1990

2

SO 021 223

Useful Knowledge for the Nineties
A Symposium on Education and the
Arts, Humanities and Sciences

Introduction
Sondra Myers
Cultural Advisor to the Governor
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Moderator
Harris Wofford
Secretary of Labor and Industry
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Speakers
Ernest L. Boyer
President
The Carnegie Foundation for the
Advancement of Teaching

David Mathews
President
The Kettering Foundation

Carolynn Reid-Wallace
Vice-Chancellor for Academic Affairs
City University of New York

SONDRA MYERS

Cultural Advisor to the Governor
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

On behalf of Governor Robert P. Casey, it is my privilege to welcome you to today's symposium, "Useful Knowledge for the 90s". This event opens our day of celebrating the 1990 Governor's Awards for Excellence in the Arts, Humanities and Sciences, which is inspired by and dedicated to Benjamin Franklin.

As we commemorate the 200th anniversary of Franklin's death this year, we celebrate his fearless pursuit of knowledge and his dauntless passion for democracy.

Franklin knew that education in the arts, humanities and sciences was necessary for a democracy—that government of, by and for the people could only be conducted by citizens who understood the world they lived in and had the capacity to imagine the future they wanted to build. The 1990s are a special time; probably all '90s have been launching pads for the next century, and in our case, for the next millennium as well. This decade is a time to settle old affairs, to take stock of the 20th century and resolve to do better in the next.

We need time for reflection and, in a democracy, we desperately need discussion. It was Benjamin Franklin who recognized that when he commented, "Reading makes a full man, meditation a profound man, discourse a clear man." Breadth, depth and clarity: we have never needed them more—if we are to find our way constructively and humanely into the next century.

Before we begin, I would like to quote another wise man, one who is with us today and is something of a spiritual descendent of Ben Franklin, Dr. Ernest Boyer. In a talk he gave recently, Dr. Boyer said "We need more science and more technology in order to meet the nation's future needs; but, we need more wisdom, too. In every field of endeavor we need men and women willing to think creatively and to act with conviction and concern." And so, informed by these two wise men, let us join together in public discourse about useful knowledge for the '90s.

HARRIS WOFFORD
Moderator

Governor Casey has a very active task force working to define the education and training necessary for the workforce now and for the '90s and for the years beyond 2000. At its first two hard-hitting meetings, what's needed came through loud and clear from our corporate leaders—leaders of both profit and not-for-profit companies. The head of Bell Telephone said that what we desperately need is a generation of workers with a sense of responsibility, with initiative, with a problem-solving spirit, and with a sense that they are members of a team—working to make a difference. One of our resource people said "You're defining a good citizen," and he said "Yes, it is a good citizen in the community and the state and the nation that we need as a good citizen in our corporate work place, in order for the workforce to go forward."

We have three good citizens on our panel today. They're members of teams, they're problem-solvers, they're innovators; they take the initiative and they take responsibility—which is what led them to come here today.

Our keynote speaker, Dr. Boyer, is president of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, a senior fellow of the Woodrow Wilson School at Princeton, and education columnist for *The London Times*. He's served on three major national commissions and received medals for work in Israel, the Soviet Union, India and Chile. His books include *College*, *The Undergraduate Experience* and *High School*, which Governor Casey has taken in many respects as a text for education reform in Pennsylvania. It's a special pleasure for us to have him give some of his useful knowledge on this occasion. Dr. Boyer.

ERNEST L. BOYER

In 1972 I was sitting in my office in Albany, New York. It was a dreary Monday and to avoid the pressures of the day, I turned instinctively to the stack of third class mail I kept on the corner of my desk to create the illusion of being very, very busy. It's an old administrative trick. On top of the heap was a student newspaper from Stanford University. The headline captured my attention because it announced that the faculty at Stanford had reintroduced a required course in Western Civilization after abolishing all requirements just three years before. The students, I discovered, were offended by the brash act of the faculty and, in a front page editorial, declared that the required course at Stanford was, and I quote, "an illiberal act." The editorial concluded by asking rhetorically, "How dare they impose uniform standards on nonuniform people?"

I was startled that some of America's most gifted students, after 14 or more years of formal education, still had not discovered the simple truth that while we are nonuniform, we still have many things in common; while we are autonomous human beings with our own aptitudes and interests, we are, at the same time, deeply dependent on each other.

This brings me to the central theme of my remarks this afternoon. I happen to believe that the most essential goals we pursue in education are best expressed by the simple word "connections." Students should learn to live independent, self-sufficient lives so they can be self-confident and economically empowered. But, it's also critically important that students go beyond their own private interests and put their learning in historical, social and ethical perspective. To put it as simply as I can—students should discover themselves and they should discover their connections. This, in responding to the theme of this colloquium, is the knowledge that is most useful.

"...the most essential goals we pursue in education are best expressed by the simple word 'connections.'"

Albert Einstein wrote that all religion, all art and all science are branches of the same tree. Frank Press, president of the National Academy of Science, said that the scientist is in some respects an artist, too, and that the magnificent double helix which broke the genetic code was not only rational; it was beautiful as well. When the physicist Victor Weiskopf was asked what gives him hope in troubled times he replied, "Mozart and quantum mechanics." But where in the curriculum do students discover

connections such as these? Indeed, scientists and artists are both in search of the aesthetic, both deeply inspired by patterns; yet in most schools, the science and art departments live in two separate worlds.

Several years ago Art Levine, who directs the Institute for Educational Management at Harvard, and I suggested that we organize the core curriculum not on the basis of disciplines that often conceal more than they reveal, but on the basis of human commonalities—those universal experiences found among all people in all cultures on the planet.

In our book, *A Quest for Common Learning*, we proposed seven themes as the foundations of a new, integrated core curriculum and when I was asked to speak on useful knowledge for the 1990s, I thought these seven themes might provide a logical and appropriate organizing structure.

"...students must learn to communicate, not just accurately, but with civility as well."

First, at the most basic level, we all share the fundamental human experiences of birth and growth and death. But most people on the planet live and die never reflecting on the mystery of their own existence. We turn life's most basic functions over to institutions: we no longer participate in birth, we do not participate in wellness, but in sickness through the medical institutions that surround us, and we are not called upon to care for loved ones as they approach the last years of their life.

The new curriculum for the 1990s should begin by asking students to look at life itself—birth, growth, death. If we were to teach all young people, beginning when they're young, about life, we might avoid the sensationalized and distracting battles over teaching sex to students. Perhaps if students knew more about themselves, they would be prepared to respond more reverentially to the world around them.

This leads me to commonality number two. All people on the planet use symbols to express feelings and ideas. The curriculum of the 1990s should include a study of how the written and the spoken word connects us to each other.

Consider the miracle of this moment: I stand here vibrating my vocal cords, molecules skitter in your direction, touch your tympanic membrane, signals scurry up your eighth cranial nerve and a response deep in your cerebrum approximates, I trust, the images in my mind.

Language is the key to everything we do. If we hope to build a spirit of community, amidst all the diversity in this nation and around the globe, then students must learn to communicate, not just accurately, but with civility as well. Wayne Booth of the University of Chicago captured the essence of civility when he observed that our efforts to speak and listen to each other often seem to be cycles spiraling downward; but we all experience moments when the spiral moves upward, when one party's effort to speak and listen just a little bit better produces a similar response from the other, making it possible for genuine understanding.

Our young people are growing up in a world where slogans have become substitutes for reason and ideas, where it is popular to use words

that hurt rather than heal. It is imperative, then, that students learn to understand the essential and sacred act of sending signals to each other.

"In the new curriculum for the 1990s, students should study the universal language we call art."

This brings me to commonality number three: all human beings respond to the aesthetic. In the new curriculum for the 1990s, students should study the universal language we call art. Dance, architecture, music, painting, and sculpture: these are languages that can be understood around the world, yet our students rarely have opportunities to develop true sensitivity to these nonverbal symbol systems. Surely the arts must be considered useful knowledge for the 1990s.

Fourth, all human beings on the planet have the miraculous capacity to recall the past and anticipate the future. As far as we know, we are the only form of life that can put ourselves in time and space. T. S. Eliot wrote that time present and time past are both present in time future, and time future is contained in time past. And yet how often we squander this awesome capacity to look in both directions.

A year or so ago there was a brittle debate in higher education about the emphasis that should be placed on Western culture. Former Secretary of Education William Bennett argued that we must study Western heritage in order to understand and appreciate our past. This is true of course, but I also would argue that students should study non-Western cultures in order to understand our future.

Fifth, everyone, from birth to death, holds membership in groups and institutions – from families to nations. Our son Craig has lived for eight years in the Mayan village of Santa Cruz, Belise – the only non-Mayan to live there in a thousand years. We visit him each year and as we sit around the fire, I am struck by the intricate social structure which maintains community life in that Mayan village. The culture is at one level strikingly different from our own, but then again, it's remarkably similar, as well. The Mayans have chosen leaders; they have jails and community meetings – all the things we understand. The point is, that people all around the world are culturally connected. They hold membership in groups and institutions – and in a new curriculum for the nineties, cross-cultural studies should be used to help students better understand the universal web of institutions that hold communities together.

"...today's students increasingly will live in a world that is economically, politically, and environmentally connected ...yet I worry that education in this country is becoming parochial at the very moment the human agenda is more global."

This brings me to commonality number six. It's universal experience. We all share with other people on the planet an inextricable relationship to nature. No education is complete without helping students understand the ordered, interdependent nature of the universe in which, as Lewis Thomas said, "We are all deeply imbedded as working parts." The harsh truth is that today's students increasingly will live in a world that is economically, politically, and environmentally connected. And yet I worry that education in this country is becoming parochial at the very moment the human agenda is more global.

"...when all is said and done, education must bring meaning to the lives of students and help them move from competence to commitment."

When I was Commissioner of Education, Joan Cooney, the creator of "Sesame Street," came to see me one day. She was starting a new program on science for junior high school students called "3,2,1...Contact." Joan told me that in doing background work for that program, she asked some junior high students in New York City where water comes from. A sizeable percentage said, "The faucet." Where does light come from? "The switch." Where does garbage go? "Down the chute." The students' vision went about as far as the refrigerator, the VCR and the light switch on the wall. They did not see connections. The new curriculum for the 1990s and beyond must focus on our connectedness to nature and on the urgent need to protect the eco-system of which we are all inextricably a part.

My seventh and final suggestion for "useful knowledge" is that everyone on the planet lives by values and beliefs. Students in our nation's colleges and schools should learn that all people, regardless of their culture, search for meaning in their lives. They should understand how we all wish to be inspired by purposes larger than our own.

I am suggesting that when all is said and done, education must bring meaning to the lives of students and help them move from competence to commitment. For this reason, several years ago at the Carnegie Foundation, we proposed a community service project for all students to help them see a connection between what they learn and how they live. Vachel Lindsey once wrote "It's the world's one crime, it's babes grow dull; not that they sow, but that they seldom reap; not that they serve, but have no god to serve; not that they die, but they die like sheep." The tragedy of life is not death. The tragedy is to die with commitments undefined, with convictions undeclared and with service unfulfilled.

"In the coming decades, students will need a more coherent view of knowledge and a more authentic, more integrated view of life."

These, then, are the commonalities that bind us all together. We all share the miracle of birth and growth and death. We all communicate with each other. We all organize ourselves in groups and institutions. We all respond to the aesthetic. We all recall the past and anticipate the future. We all are part of nature and we all seek deeper meanings for our lives. And learning about these universal experiences will, I am convinced, give students the most useful knowledge.

In the coming decades, students will need a more coherent view of knowledge and a more authentic, integrated view of life. Nearly fifty years ago, Mark Van Doren wrote "The connectedness of things is what the educator contemplates to the limit of his capacity." He said that the student who can begin early in life to see things as connected has begun a life of learning. This, it seems to me, is the essential insight all students need in the 1990s and beyond.

HARRIS WOFFORD

Our next speaker, David Mathews, also has federal cabinet experience. He served as Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare from 1975 to 1977. Before that he was President of the University of Alabama, where he taught history for 15 years. He is now President and Chief Executive Officer of the Charles F. Kettering Foundation, a research foundation that works on problems in science, education, international affairs, policy development and government problem-solving, all with an emphasis on the role of the public.

DAVID MATHEWS

I had three assignments. One was to respond to the question about trends. Another was to talk about the implications of those trends — what they suggested about the knowledge we will need. And finally, I was to say something about implications of these trends for the humanities.

Here is the way I interpret the trends. I think in the last year we have lived through the most remarkable decade in our lives. Politically the world has changed in ways that no one, not even the people who were involved in the changes, would have predicted. Not only have governments changed but governments have given way to politics. People's organizations, like New Forum and Civic Forum, which are not organizations of professional politicians, are now leading nations. No doubt that when people look back at the history of the world, this year will be an astounding year. That's not to say that all of what has been undertaken will succeed; it is simply to say that the directions people are now taking in politics were just unthinkable a year ago. I should add that by "politics" I don't mean partisan activities associated with electing governments. I mean all of those activities designed to improve the quality of common, public life.

"The history of the world is not being written by a group of people who have a certain kind of information that the rest of us don't have."

What does it all mean? Maybe people are learning different ways of solving their problems. At least people are trying to learn fundamentally different ways to solve their problems. And these people who have startled us all, who are inventing new ways, are not, I would submit, people who know the names of their state

capitals better than other people. The history of the world is not being rewritten by a group of people who have a certain kind of information that the rest of us don't have.

I don't mean to take issue with the title for this symposium but the heart of the matter is not what needs to be known but what ways of knowing are needed. We should be concerned about the information we have at our disposal politically but we should be more concerned about what we define as politically useful knowledge and the ways we acquire it.

"...we need knowledge that goes beyond 'the facts'...Democratic politics requires knowing what the facts mean...it requires understanding the consequences..."

What kind of knowledge do we need in politics? Certainly we need to know statistically important "facts". But we need knowledge that goes beyond what just "the facts" can tell us. Democratic politics requires knowing what the facts mean to others, often very different others – at that critical moment when we must choose with others what we are willing to do together. It requires understanding the consequences of the options before us.

The Greeks, who are our parents in democratic politics, made some distinctions between knowing in the physical world and knowing in the political world. It is a distinction we have lost. The term for scientific knowledge in old Greek, *episteme*, seems to have been early-on a term for marking or setting up a monument. The connotation is much the same as in the Greek word from which we get our word "knowledge," – *qnome*. Forms of this word meant "mark" or "token" of a carpenter's square – *qnomon*. What the Greeks were usually referring to was the kind of knowledge we get from measuring things or that are derived by a professional skill.

Epistemic knowledge was contrasted with what the Greeks call *doxa*, the popular estimate of the worth or value of something or a judgment. *Doxa* is more like political knowledge because in politics we are making choices about the worth or value of a particular course of action. In politics we depend on the quality of the public judgments we make on such matters.

"In politics we are much more dependent on the soundness of our judgements than the correctness of our scientific knowledge."

In politics, where the important things can seldom be measured, we are much mor dependent on the soundness of our judgments than the correctness of our scientific knowledge. My colleague, Daniel Yankelovich, who has thought much about public judgment, offers a criterion for evaluating soundness of judgment. We can say that someone who measures a 6 foot table and says it is 5 feet 10 inches is incorrect. But how do we know when a political judgment is sound? Yankelovich contends that it is when the people making the judgment are aware of and willing to accept the consequences of their decisions. The point is that "correctness" is not the only standard for the validity of knowledge. Political knowledge has its own standards of validity.

The political verbs in Greek are also interesting; they tell us something of the way we use our minds to form sound judgments. The verb often used with political process is some form of *lego* or *logos*. Early on, it is used with either the prefix *dia* or *ana* to mean gathering, as one would pick up olives — *dialeqo* — or select stones for building a wall — *analeqo*. What these words suggest is that the process of reasoning in politics is essentially analogical. It is reflective thinking in which gathering things together (or synthesis) is joined with finding the best fit, with a keen appreciation for proportion. The political thinking also depends on a dialogue, on thinking with others. It is inextricably tied to spoken words, to speech. But it is not the speech of expression and persuasion we usually associate with politics.

"Political knowledge consists of things we can know only when we are together and never when we are alone...the kind of knowledge created in civic forums, here and around the world."

Political knowledge is dependent on dialogue, on human interaction — because we can find out what the facts mean to others and what the consequences are for others only by talking to them. Political knowledge consists of things we can know only when we are together and never when we are alone. It is the kind of knowledge created in civic forums, here and around the world.

What occasions political thinking is the need to make a judgment — a choice — about what we should do; about how we should act. So acting and its prerequisite, choosing, are inextricably woven into political thinking. The result of sound political thinking for the Greeks was a kind of wisdom: phronesis or practical wisdom. It was knowing how to act, not just as an individual but with others. It was being like-minded in a common undertaking. That wisdom was like what we call common sense — meaning the sense we have in common about how to get things done. There is a connotation of cleverness—of being able to find a way to solve a problem. Political knowing is joined to acting, not separated from it.

There can be endless arguments over what Greeks in the fourth, fifth, and sixth centuries B.C. said and meant. But whether there had ever been Greeks, there is still good reason to say that political thinking is necessarily analogic and dialogic and that it has to result in sound judgments and practical wisdom.

We have a serious problem in academe with political knowledge and knowing because of the tendency to hold all knowledge to the standard of correctness rather than to the standard of soundness. We put a premium on scientific or expert knowledge as though knowing the length and width of things was going to tell us how to make sound judgment about what we should do. I don't mean to denigrate the importance of correct knowledge, but I do mean to distinguish between correct knowledge and sound judgment. They are not the same things and the former doesn't assure the latter.

Unfortunately in academe, political thinking is rarely prized. The kind of thinking students are taught is usually logical, analytic thinking as individuals. That is a wonderful way to use the human mind but it is not the use of the mind that is required for politics, for making sound judgments.

It is fashionable in academe to deny responsibility for political or civic education. Academe says that it is only responsible for teaching people how to think. But academe often neglects one of the central functions of human intelligence: public thinking.

"Politics is a practical art and like any other practice is learned only by practice...the way we teach every other practice from music to medicine."

To capture what we've lost — and to provide what we need to make politics and education whole — requires tearing down some of the walls that separate academe from the polis and politics. A young Chinese student studying in this country said that he regretted the high walls that separate many Chinese universities from the public and that he was so pleased to see that there were no walls around American universities. But after he had been in America for a while, he came to the conclusion that we have even higher walls, more formidable because they are invisible.

I applaud the new community service programs that are being added to build bridges between academe and the public, but I worry that they can be appendages and not focused on the real target; the way people learn to think politically. We can confuse altruism with citizenship. We can never have enough social services to make up for political choices that we do not make or the choices that we make incorrectly.

Politics is a practical art and like any other practice is learned only by practice. That is the way we teach every other practice from music to medicine. The quintessential practice in politics is making choices, reaching judgments with others. We wouldn't think of teaching painting with courses on art theory or case studies of famous artists. The heart of art education is a real brush and a real canvas — in the hands of a real student. Choice work is the brush and canvas of political education. So it follows that there need to be experiences for students in making the kind of choices that have consequences for the way they are going to live in this country.

Breaking down the walls ultimately requires getting rid of the myth that we don't teach politics in the universities. We say that we do not and should not teach politics because we are fearful of someone preselecting certain political norms and then trying to indoctrinate students in those norms. It is a healthy reservation. But we shouldn't be fooled into thinking we don't teach politics. We do — whether we intend to or not. There is not a discipline nor a course that does not have a political dimension. Certainly there is not a course in the humanities without political implications.

I've been involved with state humanities programs for a long time. I remember the day when it was thought that the humanities had something to do with questions of politics or public policy. I also remember the day when it was decided that questions of public policy were not to be part of the agenda of humanities councils. And I recall the reasons — the misadventures associated with the notion that there were some people called humanists who somehow had an expertise that would tell us what the right choices were in politics. There was never a greater misapplication of the humanities.

Yet the humanities also teach politics whether they intend to or not. The humanities speak to the question that characterizes politics — how should we live together? And they embrace a tradition of knowing that is far more than knowing what is correct. The humanities were the original home of what I have called political knowledge — the knowledge created by humans — that kind of knowledge that must be evident when we are in the act of making choices about what we should do. If we shut off the humanities and universities with too high a wall from anything public, from the communities in which they exist and the constituents they serve, and the struggle to make sound judgments, then we shut them off from the very sources of knowledge that people need to become politically competent. Those who study the humanities must learn from it those traditions of thought that help us when we are trying to make choices with other people about the nature of the communities in which we wish to live. Only when we recapture those traditions will academe comprehend all the uses of human intelligence; only then will politics be richer with sound judgments. Political knowledge consists of things we can know only when we are together and never when we are alone. It is the kind of knowledge created in civic forums, here and around the world.

"...the humanities teach politics whether they intend to or not...[they] speak to the question...how should we live together?"

HARRIS WOFFORD

Since August 1987, Carolynn Reid-Wallace has served as the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs for the City University of New York. For five years prior to joining the City University, she directed the University and Precollege Humanities Education Program of the National Endowment for the Humanities. She has held a number of other positions in academic administration, notably, at Bowie State College in Maryland, where she served as Acting President. Throughout her career, Dr. Reid-Wallace has earned a reputation for excellence in teaching. Her appointments include professorships in English and American Literature in a number of colleges in the United States, including Talladega College in

Alabama, Howard University, Grinnell College and George Washington University. She is a former Rockefeller Scholar, Ford Fellow and a Fulbright lecturer.

In 1987 she was appointed to a six-year term on the National Council on the Humanities of which she now serves as Vice Chairman. It is a great pleasure to welcome Carolynn Reid-Wallace.

CAROLYNN REID-WALLACE

I've been asked to address the topic of how we may go about educating ourselves to the multi-cultural richness of our country and extend access to knowledge to groups of people who are too often left out of our system. I have organized my presentation to tell you five different – but related – things.

Before I begin, I need to let you know that it's very hard to be profound; and, extraordinarily difficult to be profound when you have only ten minutes. So don't expect profundities. As a matter of fact, what I have decided to tell you is really what I think you know already. I want to repeat these things because I think we need to remember them as we try to put our minds to the questions that will occupy our attention over the next ten years.

"The United States of America is still struggling to live up to its highest ideals and create a nation where all men and all women are equal..."

The first of the five things can be said very straight forwardly. The United States of America is still struggling to find a way to live up to its highest ideals and create a nation where all men and all women are equal. Everyone in this room is aware of the fact that the struggle has been very long and it has been very difficult.

Some of us, particularly those of us in education, have from time to time despaired of ever finding a way to bring the sense of equality and the sense of justice and the sense of parity into our classrooms and into the minds of those students whom we have been asked to educate. I despair myself when I see we continue to resuscitate things we learned 20 years ago–15 years ago–10 years ago, each time with an equal amount of commitment and vigor, but apparently, leading nowhere. But I believe that

the vision, the ideals, the goals which created this country are so exceptional that even in our most despairing moments, we simply cannot lose sight of those goals.

"...the vision, the ideals, the goals which created this country are so exceptional that even in our most despairing moments, we simply cannot lose sight of those goals..."

If this country is ever going to begin to realize those goals, now is the time. Not the year 2005. Not the year 2021. But now—during the 1990s.

My second point is that we will never be able to educate ourselves to the multi-cultural richness of our country until such time as we, collectively, are willing to accept the truth that was spoken almost 128 years ago by Abraham Lincoln. Mr. Lincoln said, and I quote, "The dogmas of a quiet past are inadequate to the stormy present; the occasion is piled high with difficulty and we must rise to the occasion; as our case is new, so we must think anew."

I believe that the real challenge is that in order to find a way to change, we must first find a way to accept the fact that America has changed. In education that means we have to understand that things that were acceptable 25 years ago in this country have changed. How we educate young people, what we use to educate those people, and the people we use to educate them—what we believe about these conditions have changed drastically. It is time now for our best thinking in terms of ways to truly educate boys and girls so that they will become young men and women with the requisite skills to contribute to the society and to live lives of satisfaction and great joy.

"...the real challenge is that in order to find a way to change, we must first find a way to accept the fact that America has changed..."

We keep hearing such things as pluralism, diversity, multiculturalism—what are we talking about when we use these words? I believe that what we are really saying is we want to find a way to recognize that our nation is made up of all kinds of people and to incorporate that recognition into the curriculum and into the practices of those of us who are responsible for instruction and administration in education. As unpopular a stand as it may be, it is now time to change the straight American curriculum to reflect the larger world, a world that the students who occupy our classrooms represent.

I believe we must tell politicians that we expect them to think anew. It appears to me that in Pennsylvania, the elected officials have understood quite clearly the need to change.

We must ask educators to reconfigure their networks – my third point. Educators—teachers, principals, superintendents, chancellors, vice chancellors, presidents—all get together with each other, but have very little contact with the business community and with the larger community. As we try to use useful knowledge in the 1990s, we are going to have to find a way to bring together many of the disparate groups that surround us. I think in your state as well as my own state, we have excellent examples of different people coming together to raise questions and to make very concrete plans. We hope to ensure that all students in this country are offered a first class education.

"...it is time now to change the straight American curriculum to reflect the larger world, the world the students who occupy our classrooms represent..."

The fourth point that I want to make is one for which I make absolutely no apology: we serve no one's purposes when, in an effort to accommodate the many challenges which face us, we begin to lower our standards. We are wrong when we have expectations of our students that are less than they should be.

"...we serve no one's purposes when..we lower our standards...it is our responsibility to be clear about the fact that we expect all of our students—black, Latino, Asian, poor white, rich white—to achieve an acceptable standard of knowledge..."

I feel very strongly that as we seek change, as we try to bring together the various groups that are part of our society, the only thing that you and I and people like us throughout this nation must insist on is a rigorous and coherent curriculum—one that is inclusive, but also rigorous and coherent. It does little good to give Latino, black, or native American students a very weak program of study and then graduate them and send them out into the real world.

I think that as enlightened men and women who embrace the humanities and the values that undergrid the best humanistic thinking, it is our responsibility to be clear about the fact that we expect all of our students – black, Latino, Asian, poor white, rich white – to achieve an acceptable standard of knowledge. If we do anything less, we will be forced to come back here 20 years from now to talk about the same kinds of questions that we are struggling to understand and answer today.

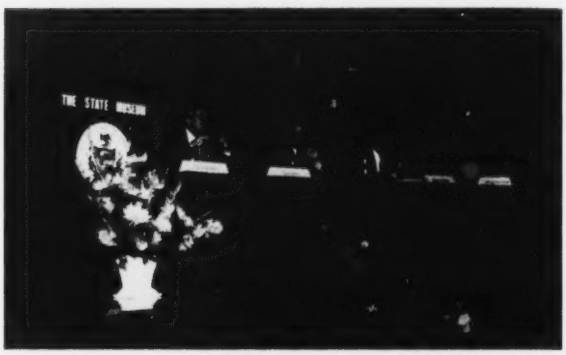
My fifth point has to do specifically with expectations. I think that our expectations as they relate to students whom we teach, whether they are university students or first graders, should be very high. I fear that too often many of us—and this is not a black-white problem, it is a human problem—have very low expectations of the students whom we teach, and that is communicated to the student. Unfortunately the student too often accepts the fact that he is not expected to deliver much and therefore will not deliver much. I do not have all of the answers as to how to avoid it, but what I do know and I know this as a mother, I know it as a teacher, I know it as an administrator and I know it as a human being—is that our expectations of students must be high if in turn we expect the student to realize his or her fullest potential.

In closing, I think a simple way to effect change is first, to begin to learn new knowledge. This applies to all of us. There is nothing wrong with you expecting your students and your children to know something about Shakespeare, Milton, Donne and Cervantes. There is also nothing wrong in having those children expect you to know about Braithwait, Nighthall and Marquez. Then, in a deliberate and strategic way, I believe we can bring the new knowledge alongside the old knowledge to our students with the highest expectations and the highest principles of accountability. Finally, we must remember when we despair that this is a struggle which will be ongoing but which we will be able to win if we conscientiously and deliberately continue to ask the difficult questions. As we begin to organize the useful knowledge for the '90s we have to rely on ourselves and our own judgment about equity and fairness. We have to depend on our own courage; we have to depend on our own commitment to accomplish those very noble goals.

"..as we begin to organize the useful knowledge for the '90s, we have to rely on ourselves and our own judgment about equity and fairness..."

HARRIS WOFFORD: Thank you Carolynn. I knew that if you went beyond the ten minutes, you'd be profound and provocative.

Before I invite you [audience] to join us in pursuing these questions, I want to point out that the educational goals expressed by our panel—the seven points of Ernie Boyer, the one big point of David Mathews and Carolynn Reid-Wallace's five points—are for all our students, not just the college bound.



We have less than a half an hour in which to continue our discussion, which will also be a part of the publication of these proceedings; let's get to the questions.

Q **How can we as parents be expected to be effective in helping our children be good students when we have lost our right to decide what is done in our schools..we have no influence...the schools don't want us.**

BOYER: Forgive me, but I am very surprised by your question. We [Carnegie Foundation] recently surveyed 22,000 teachers and 72% said lack of parental participation in education is a major problem. Your question opens the issue that there may be a huge misunderstanding going on between parents and teachers.

Many teachers say they feel they are expected to do what parents, schools and churches were expected to do in former days. And perhaps their feeling is not wrong. A study of fifth graders last year found that 40% of them go home from school to an empty house, 30% said their family does not sit down to eat a meal together, and 60% said they would like to spend more time with their mother and father.

So, from the view of teachers, parents are much less involved in the education of their own children, let alone involved in school on a political level.

I believe it may be true that for many years schools may not have seemed particularly hospitable to parents...perhaps our schools are now

paying a price for what might have been an attitude of "we [educators] know better than you."

But, we know more and more families have both parents working, there are more single parent families and it's very difficult for parents to find the time to handle the economic obligations of the family and still be involved in schools or schooling. That's a reality of family life today.

We must do something to help. I've been so radical to suggest that in the future, we will need policies where employers give parents days...with pay, so they can be engaged all day at school with their children. I'd like to see the first day of school in America be a day of celebration!

The reestablishment of a connection between teachers and parents is an absolute requirement if we hope to see schooling in this country become more effective during the 1990's.

MATHEWS: I remember a teacher once wrote a letter to the editor of her town's newspaper and said "You don't understand that teaching is a serious professional activity. It is like brain surgery and you wouldn't want all these people in the community standing around the operating room trying to call the shots." So it's not just that parents may have gotten the impression that they shouldn't get involved—I think that we, in the teaching profession, have a notion of education that does indeed suggest that it's kind of like brain surgery.

We are now trying to bring the parent back into the system but, we still face the problem of defining on whose terms and about what. We can't invite parents to be experts on teaching methods or what should be in the curriculum—that won't work unless what the parent knows is equal to what the teacher knows.

Involvement is not just a matter of rights, but the capacity of each to contribute. We have to define what we need and can expect from parents and from teachers.

When we studied communities that produced remarkable changes to improve their school systems against all odds, we found only one thing in common in these places. It was not a single program, method, or curriculum...it was captured in a quotation we got from somebody we interviewed as we searched for what made the difference. This fellow said, "Everybody in this town is trying to teach those kids."

That town had magnet schools local business helped run. It had tutorial programs run by churches and synagogues. It had every kind of program you could think of because everybody in that town was trying to teach those kids. Everybody had something to contribute.

I suspect that what we want for our own students—for our schools and communities—will only be achieved when we learn how to help everyone recognize that we all can and must contribute to the process of educating our children.

Q **Instilling the joy of learning—just how do we do it? This country is my adopted culture and I want the best of it for my children but what do I tell my children to make them sit with a book when their friends are playing baseball? ...What do I tell my son when he argues that baseball players earn millions of dollars?**

WOFFORD: That is a good question for all of us. Instilling a love of learning must start at home by parents setting an example; children have to see us living true to that ideal, even though popular culture around us may be filled with competing ideas.

Your comment has given me insight into something I've been trying to sort out for some time. Our department [Labor and Industry] runs a program for about 50,000 school drop outs and others in the Federal Job Training partnership who need a second chance. These young people come from homes where there was no nurturing of a love of learning. Perhaps our task for the '90s is to organize support networks in the community that will give children with parents who work outside the home the best kinds of conditions to nurture values. When I was a kid it used to be the church, the Y, community clubs.

BOYER: I think that in the '90s we will need to work on intergenerational connections. The way our society is organized, you can spend all your life only with your age peers. That is kind of dreary. Margaret Meade said a healthy culture is one where you have three generations vitally interacting.

My father and mother lived in a retirement community where there was a day care center. When I'd call my father, he wouldn't talk about his aches and pains, he'd talk about his little friend—that child had a wonderful friend and example in my father and my father had the joy and inspiration of a child.

Statistics for the '90s show lots of young people—especially from minority groups—and a large older population. Can we get these two together instead of seeing them grow to worry about each other?

WOFFORD: We have generations-together programs in Pennsylvania...there's one which has senior citizens on the telephone with latchkey kids home from school before their parents are home from work.

BOYER: By the way, I heard recently the reason grandparents and grandchildren get along so well together is that they have a common enemy.

MATHEWS: How many of you would agree with me if I said there is no such thing as learning for its own sake?

Most people don't believe that and I know I'm not supposed to either, but I'm having some doubts. Perhaps we believe in learning for its own sake because that is one of the most deeply held traditions of academic culture. Or, perhaps we believe it because we have the idea that the only alternative to learning for its own sake is some kind of crassly vocational objective.

But perhaps our friend's son was right about baseball and inspires us to consider that maybe the only way we learn is when there is some purpose for learning. Maybe, as Ernie suggests, we only learn when we can make a connection between learning and ourselves.

Q **We know that our society has been speaking of a crisis in education for years. There have been studies and proposals of methods and ideas for the past thirty years, but there has been no great revolution. What will let the ideas that come from respected bodies like the Carnegie Commission or this panel perculate down to the local level?**

MATHEWS: I don't think it's that we have not had a revolution, I think we have had constant revolutions.

You ask how to get these ideas from on high down low? I think I'd rather do the reverse. I respect the Carnegie Commission, but they're not all wise and all knowing. I think the place where people should make choices about themselves is where they live, in their communities. I think there is a lot of good common sense there. Ultimately we will have to rely on our own judgment that where we are is not where we should be and that there are other ways to get some other place.

BOYER: That is, perhaps, the essence of the public debate about American Education is at the moment: national or local control.

America has always been ambivalent about governance—we want local control but we also want national results and we have never known how to mediate the two.

Up until the past twenty years or so we were confident that localism—83,000 schools, 16,000 districts—would make America strong and keep it strong. There is abundant evidence that America no longer believes that. We are now clammoring for something called national goals and national accountability. How we resolve this tension between local control and national results will shape the future of education for decades to come.

Personally, I am absolutely ambivalent. I do not believe romantically that wisdom will bubble up out of 16,000 districts left to their own devices without some sense of mission, goals and some accountability. On the other hand, I'm equally uncommitted to a federal czar of education who can

issue directives and hold us accountable in a rigid bureaucratic fashion. I happen to believe there is a middle ground.

I would hope we could have a vigorous debate in which we find a way to balance national outcomes with greater vitality at the local level. I also believe that if we don't move quickly to apply a degree of accountability there will be a great wave of disenchantment with the schools. Those who can will bail out and our public schools will be left to the least advantaged and the disenfranchised. This will undermine the future of the nation. We are facing a problem we never faced before—how we resolve this debate is crucial.

REID-WALLACE: Ernie, in some parts of the country, particularly urban areas, we have already abandoned the schools. I don't think there is a simple answer and I think it is good that we can't offer a simple answer.

The demands of the workforce have begun to help all of us, educators and citizens, to redefine issues on a local and state level. Perhaps if we are really wise we will take advantage of this opportunity to work in concert with the private sector to propose solutions.

WOFFORD: Alexander Hamilton said the United States would never come into being by rhetoric and persuasion if there hadn't been the harsh logic of events that brought the colonies together. Maybe the harsh logic of events will move us.

I believe the tension—the clash between seeing where we are failing and where we are really succeeding—will raise plenty of friction and generate some light.